

## What are Weeds of National Significance?

To help focus national efforts to address weed problems in Australia, a list of Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) was compiled. Plant species were selected on the basis of their invasiveness and impact characteristics, their potential and current area of spread and their primary industry, environmental and socioeconomic impacts.

It is a list of the most problematic plant species in Australia as determined by the Federal government.

**The major WoNS in this area are Serrated Tussock, Bridal Creeper and Boneseed.**

### **Serrated Tussock (ST)** (*Nassella trichotoma*)

**Native to South America**

Serrated Tussock is thought to have arrived in **Australia** in the early 1900s, possibly in saddle packing.

Seeds are mainly spread by wind. Mature plants can produce more than 140,000 seeds per plant per year and can be blown up to 20 km..

Seeds also spread with feed, animals, machinery and firewood.

- \* Serrated tussock can cause serious impacts in native habitats and grasslands
- \* It is drought tolerant
- \* It builds large seed-banks in the soil and some may stay viable for many years
- \* Seeds can germinate at any time of year.
- \* ST is unpalatable to stock and of little nutritive value.  
However livestock feeding in pastures dominated by Serrated tussock can develop indigestible balls in the rumen, causing a loss of condition and eventual death.
- Dense infestations of Serrated Tussock can pose a fire hazard, burning up to seven times more intensely than native grasslands

The most effective way of controlling ST is to learn to identify the weed, regularly check for it and act to immediately to remove it.

In peri-urban areas removal by hoeing, is a good method for selective removal of weeds without disturbing the surrounding desirable vegetation. This is possible in small areas, such as gardens or in larger areas during bush regeneration.

Best Practice Management for the farming community includes chemical control, physical control, competition, mulching and fire.

Herbicide treatment alone usually results in re-infestation of Serrated Tussock from seed in the soil, so it is important to incorporate other control methods in an integrated management strategy

## **Bridal Creeper** (*Asparagus asparagoide)s* **Native to South Africa**

Bridal Creeper was introduced into Australia as a garden plant during the 1870s. It was grown as an ornamental proving popular in floral arrangements, in particular bridal bouquets and hanging baskets. Despite being a Declared Noxious Weed, it is still available in some nurseries.

The seed is dispersed by birds along roadside, into native vegetation patches and further afield. Rabbits and foxes also eat fruit and disperse seeds.

- Bridal creeper is a very serious threat to indigenous vegetation.
- It prevents germination of native ground cover and shrubs by depriving them of light.
- It will also damage the vegetation that it climbs.
- Roots can be produced whenever the stems are in contact with the soil.

Biological control is available for this weed and is having an impact in many areas. However, takes many years for biocontrol agents to reduce density of Bridal Creeper due to the huge reserves stored underground in tubers.

## **Boneseed** (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera* ssp. *monilifera*) **Native to South Africa**

In Australia Boneseed was originally planted in the 1850's as a garden species and to stabilise sand dunes.

Birds are a major method of spread along with rabbits, foxes and cattle.

- \* Boneseed is an illegal noxious weed and must not be sold
- \* It is highly adaptable, invasive and will grow in any soil type.

- \* Boneseed colonises rapidly after fire.
- \* It displaces plants needed to feed native animals.

A range of effective control measures for boneseed are available, including hand pulling, herbicide treatment and fire.

Natural regeneration or over-sowing with locally collected seed of native species is an important part of the rehabilitation process.

## **What are Environmental Weeds?**

Environmental weeds are plants that invade natural areas, agricultural areas and roadsides. They adversely affect regeneration and survival of the indigenous flora and fauna.

- Environmental weeds displace natural vegetation preventing regeneration of indigenous trees, shrub, and groundcovers
- \* They alter the landscape character of the Australian environment and cause extinction of local plant species
- Environmental weeds reduce the available habitat for our local wild-life species.

**Environmental weeds are considered to be the single greatest threat to native vegetation**

### **Agapanthus** (*Agapanthus praecox* ssp. *orientalis*)

Lily of the Nile, African Lily, Blue Lily  
Native to South Africa.

Agapanthus produce large quantities of seeds that spread are rapidly by wind, water, animals, cars, machinery and illegal dumping of garden waste on roadsides. They invade bush-land, waterways and roadsides.

### **What can you do?**

- \* Don't plant agapanthus in your garden.
- \* Dig it out and remove existing plants, or use systematic herbicide and apply to foliage.

\* Remove seed heads before they ripen and put them into black plastic bags and into bins.

\* Replace Agapanthus with non-invasive plants

### **Agapanthus replacement plants**

\* Blue-flax Lily – *Dianella revolute*

\* Mat-rushes - *Lomandra longifolia*

\* Kangaroo Paws - *Anigozanthos* species

TIP: Cut off the flower heads each year before they dry and set set.

### **Gazanias** (*Gazania linearis*)

Gazanias are very invasive. Many varieties are available in nurseries.

They produce abundant seeds that are spread by wind, water and dumping of garden waste.

Gazanias spread densely along roadsides (Dog Rocks Road) and into adjoining bush-land by seed blown from nearby gardens. This prevents the growth of native grasses and ground layer plants.

**Replace those garden plants known to be really invasive. Local nurseries should be able to help in selecting alternatives.**

**Dispose of garden waste responsibly. Never dump it, rather, take it to the tip.**

**Get involved in community groups**

You will find details on Weeds of the Moorabool and Golden Plains Shire and also Indigenous Planting Guides at

<https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/residents/my-home/environment>